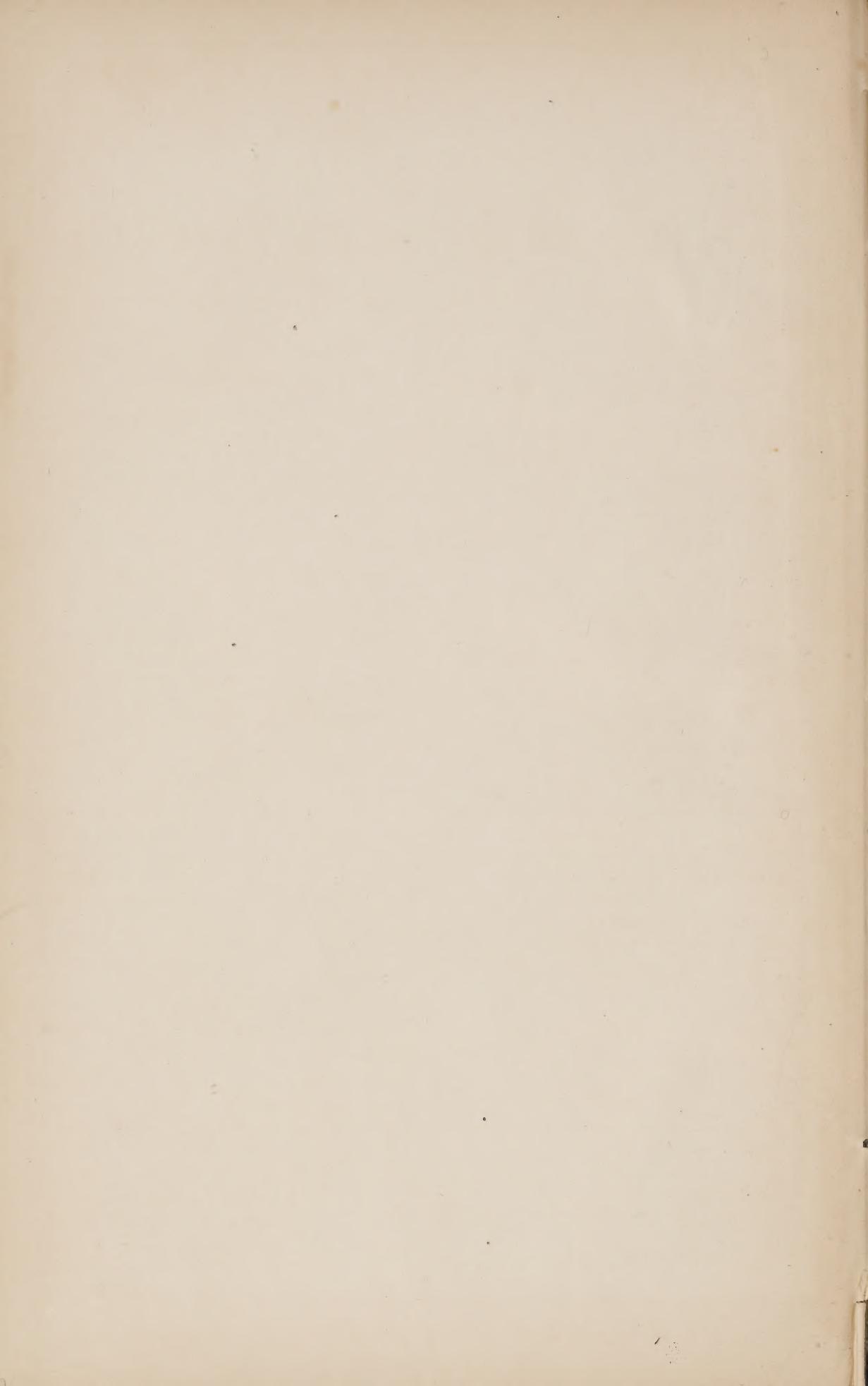


THE  
AMERICAN STAMP  
MERCURY  
AND  
NUMISMATIST  
—  
VOL. I.



# THE American Stamp Mercury

VOL. I.

BOSTON, OCT. 25, 1867.

No. 1.

## The American Stamp Mercury.

Published on the 25th of every month by F. TRIFET.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES, 50 CENTS PER YEAR, IN ADVANCE.

TO GETTERS UP OF CLUBS. To any person sending us three subscribers, Packet No. 34 of our list will be given; five subscribers, No. 21; eight subscribers, No. 25.

The postage (12 cents a year) must be paid at the office where the paper is received.

### ADVERTISEMENTS.

10 cents per line for one insertion, or 50 cents for six months.

All letters respecting the paper should be addressed to F. TRIFET, Publisher of Stamp Mercury, Box 444, Boston, Mass.

### PROSPECTUS.

We will not make any great noise about our coming into this world, as we leave all the praising part in the hands of our friends and contemporaries of the Philatelic Press, but will merely give a prospectus of what the Mercury will be.

### CONTENTS.

The Mercury will contain each month, a correct and complete list of all newly issued stamps, illustrated with at least two engravings from the best local artists,

#### Original Articles.

Extracts from other Papers and Magazines,

Correspondence; in this department any letter sent to us that would interest the collecting public in general, will be reproduced. We would therefore ask of our correspondents who may know anything about Stamps, Albums, &c., not previously noticed, to contribute to this part of the publication.

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENTS. In this column we will endeavor to answer to the best of our abilities all questions sent us.

In addition to the above, there will be other suitable materials, all strictly relating to stamp matters.

For Terms &c., see above.

### SPECIAL NOTICE.

We have a large number of interesting articles which, on account of space we have to leave out; therefore if we receive two hundred subscribers before Nov. 10th. we will increase our size to eight pages, thus making it the largest STAMP Journal in America.

### NEWLY ISSUED STAMPS.



AUSTRIA and AUSTRIAN ITALY. The new issue now numbers two additional values, viz:—

25kr. and soldi, violet.  
50 " " Salmon.

The first is identical with the others of the same valuation, but the 50 is considerably larger, as will be seen by our illustration of the soldi one, and its general appearance is more effective than the lower value. The paper is the same as that employed for the other members of the series—woven, and the perforations very fine. Their facial value are, respectively in gold, twelve and twenty-four cents.

ARGENTINE REPUBLIC. The current issue of 1866 being exhausted, the 5 centavo is temporarily struck off on a thinnish paper without watermark and unperforated.

BOLIVIA. The stamp of which we give an engraving, is supposed to be one coming from Bolivia, our contemporary, *The Stamp Collector's Magazine*, describes it as being rough in execution, rather above the average in size, and the color a deep sap-green.



# THE AMERICAN

As there are no official information regarding this stamp, we do not vouch for its authenticity.

**CEYLON.** The fivepence is now printed in a dull yellow-green.

**HOLLAND.** is to have a new issue, comprising six values, viz:—

5c. blue,	20c. green,
10 red,	25 violet,
15 brown,	50 gold.

**ITALY.** *Le Timbophile*, gives currency to the report that Italy is going to issue a new series of stamps, bearing the head of Victor Emanuel, encircled with the famous Iron Crown.

**NORWAY.** The new 4 skilling stamp has just made its sudden appearance. It is identical with the new 2 skill, that is with the value at the bottom repeated, viz:—"2 SKILL 2", and the lines in the ground work are perpendicular instead of diagonal, color, blue.

**PERU.** The new 10 and 20 centave, rose and brown, have made their appearance.

**PORTUGAL.** The 25 reis is now perforated

**VIRGIN ISLAND.** The shilling stamp of this Island has now a larger border, and the color is carmine, instead of rose.

## ANSWERS, &C.

**W. M; Chicago.**—Inquire at the Newspaper Department, as our publisher's catalogues are sent by book post.

**J. W. R.**—An envelope stamp gummed on to another envelope, will not pay postage; the letter will be sent to the Dead Letter Office.

**L. H. S.; New York.**—The stamp you described is an Austrian revenue.

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**CARD COLLECTOR.**—We would call the attention of our readers to the advertisement of A. G. Broome. Those wanting business cards to fill their collection, that is get one of each, city, can procure them from him, as he has the largest assortment in the United States.

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**CONUNDRUM.**—Why are some of the Government officials like some of its postage stamps? Because they are poor sticks.

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**ESTABLISHMENT OF THE POSTAL SYSTEM IN THE UNITED STATES.**—The postal system, first projected in 1692, was not put into operation until 1710, when the states were still a British colony. Benjamin Franklin was appointed postmaster-general in 1753 with an income of £600 a year for himself and secretary, Franklin, on account of sympathizing with the aggrieved colonist, was superseded in 1774.

## TO YOUNG COLLECTORS.

There are so many young collectors now, that a few words of advice to them may not be out of the way. Boys, being seldom able to purchase very expensive stamps, must as a rule be content with the cheaper varieties. But they need not regret that their limited supply of pocket money prevents them from obtaining rare varieties for it is well known that the cheapest stamps are the handsomest. The 1 cent Nova Scotia, 1 kop. Russia,  $\frac{1}{2}$  sch. Heligoland and several others we know of, are not exceeded in beauty by any of their costlier companions.

It would be better for a young collector not to try to get sets: the best plan would be to get the cheap varieties of each country. By this means he would have, at a cost of not more than ten dollars, about 500 specimens of the stamps of nearly every part of the Globe, which thus gathered would give more instruction than a number of sets.

For such a collection a large book is not necessary. A small album or blank book is sufficient, as stamps look better when placed together than scattered all over a book which all the specimens of stamps issued would not fill.

We have seen many a good looking stamp spoiled by being daubed over with thick gum or, worse, dirtyingers. Therefore we should recommend neatness in arranging them.

In many cases collections are made in account books ruled with money columns; but stamps do not look well in them. We should advise intending collectors, to obtain either an album, or a book with entirely blank leaves.

If your book does not contain printed titles, write them in a neat and legible hand, taking care not to make any mistakes or blots and leaving enough space for the stamps of each country. It is well if the young collector possesses a friend competent to advise him upon the genuineness of specimens he may wish to purchase, as there are so many forgeries in existence, which are offered for sale at temptingly low prices, that too great caution can not be used.

In conclusion, do not get discourage if you are not able to get all the stamps you want at once. Patience is necessary in collecting as well as in anything else. You must be content to gather your required stamps as opportunity offers and in the meanwhile 'earn to labour and wait'.

## LIST OF UNITED STATES REVENUE STAMPS.

We cannot guarantee that this list is a *perfect* one, but it is as reliable as it can possibly be made. The prices attached, are those which the publisher charges.

Device.	Facial Value.	Selling Price.
Agreement,	5 cents.	\$.01
Bank Check,	2 cents, blue and orange.	.01
Bill of Lading,	10 cents.	.01
Bond,	25 cents.	.02
Certificate,	2 cents, blue and orange. 5 " 10 " 25 "	.01 .01 .01 .02
Charter Party,	1 dollar. 3 " 5 " 10 "	.08 .06 .25 .01
Contract,	10 cents. 50 cents. 1 dollar.	.01 .02 .03
Conveyance,	2 " 5 " 10 " 20 " 50 "	.05 .06 .25 .25 1.25
Entry of Goods,	25 cents. 50 cents. 1 dollar. 1 cent.	.02 .02 .03 .01
Express,	2 " blue and orange. 5 " 3 cents. 5 " 10 " 15 " 20 " 30 " 50 "	.01 .01 .01 .01 .01 .01 .02 .02
Foreign Exchange	70 " 1 dollar. 1 " 30 cents. 1 " 60 " 1 " 90 " 3 cents. 4 " 5 " 6 " 10 " 15 " 20 " 30 " 40 " 60 "	.03 .03 .10 .10 .10 .01 .01 .01 .01 .01 .01 .02 .02 .03 .03 .03
Inland Exchange,	1 dollar, 1 " 50 cents. 2 " 50 " 3 " 50 "	.03 .3 .05 .04
Insurance,	10 cents 25 "	.02 .02
Lease,	50 cents. 1 dollar.	.02 .03

Life Insurance,	25 cents. 50 " 1 dollar.	.02
Lottery Ticket,	50 cents.	.03
Manifest,	1 dollar. 3 " 5 " 50 cents. 1 dollar. 2 "	.10 .06 .02 .03 .05
Mortgage,	5 " 10 " 15 " 25 "	.06 .25 1.25 1.50
Original Process,	50 cents.	.03
Passage Ticket,	50 cents. 1 dollar. 1 cent. 2 " blue and orange.	.02 .03 .01 .01
Playing Cards,	3 " 4 " 5 " 10 "	.01 .01 .01 .03
Power of Attor'y,	10 cents. 25 "	.01 .02
Probate of Will,	1 dollar. 50 cents 1 dollar.	.03 .04
Protest,	2 " 5 " 10 " 20 "	.05 .06 .25 1.25
Surety Bond,	25 cents. 1 cent.	.02 .01
Telegraph,	blue and orange. 3 "	.01 .01
U. S. Int. Rev.,	2 cents.	.01
Warehouse Rec't,	25 cents.	.02
No Denomination	200 dollar	uncertain.

Will any of our readers finding a mistake in the above, point it out to us so as to have it corrected, and make the list perfect.

CONUNDRUM.—Why are school boys like postage stamps? Because one is licked with a stick, and the other sticks with a lick.

THE STAMP COLLECTOR'S HAND-BOOK.—Gives a full description of all the stamps issued from 1840 to 1867. Compiled by the late C. M. SELTZ. Sent post free on recipt of 27 cents.

F. TRIFET,  
57 Court St. Boston, Mass.

# THE AMERICAN STAMP MERCURY.

**F. TRIFET**  
*Wholesale and Retail Dealer*

IN AMERICAN AND FOREIGN

## Postage Stamps,

— ALSO —

Local Stamps,  
Revenue Stamps,  
Proof Stamps,  
Essay Stamps,  
Stamp Albums.  
&c., &c., &c.

All Stamps Warranted Genuine.

20 pp. DESCRIPTIVE PRICE-LIST.

Containing the shape, color, price, etc., of about 2,500 stamps, sent to any address on receipt of 15 cts.

### WANTED.

Stamps of all kinds, especially the old issues of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, &c., also U. S. Envelopes, for which the best prices will be paid, either in cash, or stamps.

All communications to contain stamp for reply.

F. TRIFET,  
57 Court St., Boston, Mass.

WANTED, back numbers of 'THE STAMP COLLECTOR'S RECORD' for which a good price, either in stamps or cash, will be given.

F. TRIFET,  
57 Court St. Boston, Mass.

"TIME POSTAL LABEL!" This is a new, original, and very useful little stamp just now becoming popular, and having a large sale. It is the size of a Postage Stamp. In its centre is a miniature clock dial, without hands, and underneath are the words Day—Month—

Its object is to show the recipient of a letter just the hour and day the letter was mailed, that in case of its non-receipt at the proper time, the blame can be placed on the right party. It very frequently becomes not only an object of great interest but importance to know just when a letter was mailed. The party sending a letter marks a pointer at the hour it leaves his hands, and also fills out the blank below with the month and day. Post free, 20 cents per hundred.

F. TRIFET,  
57 Court St. Boston, Mass.

SWISS ENVELOPES.—The new ten centime Swiss envelope, unused, 10 cents each.

F. TRIFET,  
57 Court St. Boston, Mass.

TIN TYPES! TIN TYPES!! TIN TYPES!!!  
A large lot of TIN TYPE ALBUMS for sale cheap.

Albums containing places for 24 tin types, 30 cts.  
" " " 48 " 40 "  
" " " 96 " 50 "  
" " " 150 " 90 "

All bound in morocco, gilt edge, clasp, &c. &c. Sent. post paid, on receipt of price.

C. J. Colesworthy,  
57 Court St. Boston, Mass.

UNITED STATES, 1851.—Sett of 8, unused, \$1.50

N. Y. Post Office, sett of 5, unused, 2.00  
Wells, Fargo & Co. sett of 11 2.25  
F. TRIFET,  
57 Court St. Boston, Mass.

THE NONPAREIL STAMP ALBUM.—Ruled to contain over 1100 stamps, with description of current issues in English, French and German. The cheapest album published. Embossed cloth covers; 75 cents; by mail, 80 cents.

F. TRIFET,  
57 Court St. Boston, Mass.

CARD COLLECTORS! ATTENTION!! The undersigned will send to any address, post paid on receipt of 25 cts. a packet of 20 RARE CARDS including those from Boston; New York; Brooklyn Phila.; Portland; Balto.; Chicago; Cincinnati; London, Eng.; Richmond, Va.; Malden, Mass.; Washington, D. C.; and 8 other cities and towns.

Always on hand, and for sale at moderate prices, cards from all the principal cities and towns of the United States and Canada. Send 10 cents for list. Address,

A. G. Broome;  
Station A. Boston, Mass.

CONFEDERATE FAC-SIMILES.—35 varieties, 1 cent each.

F. TRIFET,  
57 Court St. Boston, Mass.

CONTINENTALS.—Well mixed Continentals C 30, 50 and 75 cents per 100; or \$2.50, \$5.00 and \$7.00 per 1000.

F. TRIFET,  
57 Court St. Boston, Mass.

FLAGS OF ALL NATIONS beatifully colored; suitable for Hill's Album. . . . 25 cents. Arms of all nations, . . . . . 25 cents.

F. TRIFET,  
57 Court St. Boston, Mass.

PRICE CATALOGUE of all the stamps issued from 1840 to 1867, giving date of issue, color, shape, value, &c. of about 2500 varieties; being the ONLY one published in America. Sent to any address, post paid, on receipt of 15 cents.

F. TRIFET,  
57 Court St. Boston, Mass.

# The

# American Stamp Mercury

VOL. I.

BOSTON, NOV. 25, 1867.

No. 2.

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### THANKS.

We beg leave to offer our sincere thanks to our friends and the stamp collecting and dealing public in general, for the liberal patronage and encouragement they have given us in the way of subscriptions, advertisements, notices, &c. By their kindness, we are able to come forth this month double in size, and hope that the day is not far when we may still enlarge our publication. It is now the largest sheet, devoted strictly to stamps, published in America, and we hope that with the further assistance of our friends to make it a periodical of which the Philatelic public will be proud of.

We solicit their assistance in the way of Editorials, Correspondance, advices, (for we are not to proud to disdain the latter) subscriptions and advertisements, in return of which we promise to give them a perfectly reliable journal, which, we hope, will find its way into the hands of every person interested in stamps.

We would call the attention to the greatly improved appearance of the MERCURY; when we first published it our ambition did not go beyond issuing a monthly circular, giving such information as might prove of service to our numerous correspondents, but we are happy to say, that our enterprise has been such a success that we have determined to make it more than a mere monthly catalogue of new stamps &c. in fine, we have come to the conclusion to make it, THE stamp paper of America or perish in the attempt.

In conclusion we would once more thank our friends, and hope that they will not abandon us, but in the contrary give us all their support. Again we repeat, thanks; thanks to all who have contributed to the success of our undertaking.

### NEWLY-ISSUED STAMPS.

UNITED STATES.—The three cent stamp, and we suppose the others also, are now embossed in little squares over the face. The object of it is to prevent its being pulled off the envelope without tearing or make it impossible to clean them. More of this anon.

ARGENTINE REPUBLIC. We subjoin the following from the *Stamp Collectors Magazine*.

We have already placed our readers in possession of some details respecting the anticipated emission.—They are acquainted with the fact that each stamp is to bear a different portrait, that the values are to be the same as those of the 1864 series, and the colours similar. We are now in receipt of a complete set of the *debutants*, obtained by favor from the Buenos Ayres post-office, as the higher values are kept back until the exhaustion of the present stock, and may not be issued for some months to come.

The 5 centavos bears the portrait of Rivadavia in a circle, containing the words, REPUBLICA ARGENTINA, and the figure 5. This circle is placed upon a shaded scutcheon, occupying seven-eights of the stamp, and bearing a large figure 5 in the upper angles. Below the shield is a scroll inscribed with the value, CINCO CENTAVOS, and some ornamental foliage. The portrait is not very like that on the preceding series; it shows greater determination of character in the projecting compressed lips, and, generally, more animation. In colour the stamp is a fine vermillion. Altogether, this novel design, judged by the

high standard we are accustomed to apply to the company's productions, hardly comes up to our expectations.

The 10 centavos is by far the handsomest of the series. No eccentricity of design is allowed to mar the beauty of the portrait, which stands out, the most prominent feature (if we may use the expression) of the stamp. It is the portrait of General Belgrano, but no one would guess from the fine, dreamy, thoughtful countenance that its possessor was a military man. It bears a certain resemblance to the first Napoleon, but the stern expression of the French emperor is not reproduced in the face of the Argentine celebrity. We are not acquainted with the history of the republic, and cannot at the moment, lay our hands on any biography of Belgrano, but, without any such special knowledge, we should judge, from his stamp portrait, to have been the philosophic spirit of the Independencia. Rivadavia may have contributed diplomatic skill; San Martin, military genius; but we should fancy that the work of laying the legislative foundation of the young Republic was performed by Belgrano. Thus much for the face. Its frame-work consists of an oval; having on each side a small shield, bearing the national arms as they appear on the stamps of the Confederation, and the inscription in white letters, REPUBLICA ARGENTINA, DIEZ CENTAVOS. The rectangle is completed by the addition of ornamental corner pieces bearing the figure 10. The stamp is printed a fine deep green.

The remaining stamp of the series also bears a characteristic portrait—that of General San Martin, or San Martino. Though not in uniform, he looks every inch a soldier, with head erect, keen eyes, and resolute expression. His effigy was worthy of a more tasteful frame: the secondary portions of the design have been allowed, as in the 5 c., to encroach too much upon the space required for the proper display of the portrait. A lozenge-shape border constitutes the enclosure, and is inscribed REPUBLICA ARGENTINA, QUINCE CENTAVOS; the angles are occupied with a large circle, containing the figure 15 and some minor ornaments. In colour this stamp is a deep-blue, exactly like that of the 24c. Newfoundland. All the stamps are printed on white, unwatermarked paper, perforated.



HOLLAND.—Annexed is an engraving of one of the new stamps described in our last. The 20c. green, 25c. dark violet and 50c. gold are the only ones out.

ROMAN STATES.—This country has just issued an entirely new set having the denomination in centimes instead of bajicos as formerly. They are

10 cent vermillion (size of the 8 baj)

2 " green " " 2 "  
5 " blue " " 3 "  
20 " lake " " 4 "  
40 " yellow " " 6 "  
80 " rose " " 1 "

They are printed in black on coloured glazed paper and look very much like our own locals.

MEXICO.—We have in our possession a stamp supposed to be the provisional Guadalara stamp and not postmark. It is a reprint from the old Cuatro Real of the Hidalgo series and is printed in a very faint mauve on blue paper. It has a very mean appearance and will no doubt be soon withdrawn from service.

CANADA.—We have information as to an essay having been made by the American Bank Note Co. for this country. It is described as being very much like the 5 cents Nova Scotia, having the Queen's head in a circle, "CANADA" above, "FIVE CENTS" below, and struck in black on India paper. The person saw the stamp and can tell the Company's work.

TURKEY.—From this far distant shore comes a stamp or rather a set of stamps, there being three, which are supposed to be locals for the city of Constantinople.

The following is the description: "LOCAL-POST" above, "20 paras" below centre figure, a miscellaneous bunch of mountains, moon, sun, railroad, ships, boats, &c. having the general appearance of the so-called Guatemala. We are very much inclined to think it is a *bogus* got up to sell; however should anything turn up, we will let our readers know it.

BRAZIL. Another envelope, similar to the 200 reis, has been issued for this country. The value is 300 reis, colour vermillion, and—CORREIO BRASILEIRO for a water mark.

WURTEMBERG.—A new returned letter stamp has been issued similar to the previous one, and perforated,

STRAITS SETTLEMENT.—This newly formed colony has a provisional series consisting of the current British India, with the Imperial printed above the Queen's head and the value in cents below; they are as follows:

THREE	CENTS in blue on 1 anna brown.
SIX	" " purple " 2 " orange.
EIGHT	" " green " 2 " "
TWENTY-FOUR	" " blue " 8 " rose.

THE EDITORS of the various stamp journals would confer a favor on the Editor of the MERCURY by sending him their back numbers; he is also anxious to procure files of a number of Timbophilic Magazines now defunct. Can any of our readers oblige us? we would be happy to reciprocate in any way in our power.



## ANSWERS.

G. H. W. Pennington, N. J.—By "mixed Continentals" is meant the common stamps of Europe.—2. I do not deal in coins.

F. A. D. Montrose, Pa.—Your first stamp, 1gr. pink, is Bremen. The black and rose one we can not make out from your description. The other with the SPHINX not an IDOL, is one of the new Egyptian.

W. H. R. Syracuse, N Y.—The object in card collecting is to get a business card from each city.

INQUIRER.—F. H. King, better known as C. M. Seltz, died last September.

G. W. W. W. Portsmouth N. H.—Your Brazil stamp is worth 12 cents. There is no 1c. Swiss.

ANY PAPER copying our advertisement and sending us a marked copy, will have the favor reciprocated.

WILL the members of the Philatelic press please exchange.

## WINTER MAIL SERVICE

ACROSS THE

Straits of Northumberland,

FROM PRINCE EDWARD'S ISLAND TO THE MAIN-  
LAND OF NEW BRUNSWICK.

We are favored by an English gentleman with some sketches, and a narrative of his journey by a mail route, which, though comparatively near at hand, is unheard of by the general public, as though it were in the Antipodes, and yet it may be pronounced to be, probably, the most remarkable piece of *regular mail service* in the world.

Many of our readers are probably very indistinct in their ideas as to the exact locality of Prince Edward Island. If they will take a map of British North America, and look in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, where it forms a great bay in the coasts of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, they will see this island, distant about fifteen miles from either shore, with the Northumberland Straits running between. For fully four months in the year these straits are blocked up with ice, borne down from the St. Lawrence river and the Talvador coast. Across this ice is the only means of communication between the island and the rest of the world. With this preface the writer proceeds with his narrative.

Having, when taken a tour in Nova Scotia, heard much of the beauty and fertility of Prince Edward Island, as well as of the agreeable and hospitable

character of its inhabitants, I determined to pay a visit to the place, and most heartily do I congratulate myself that I did so. I was equally surprised and pleased to find very excellent society in Charlotte Town and the neighborhood, to which I quickly gained an *entree* through discovering, in the head of one of the leading families, an old public-schoolfellow. None but those who have been educated in one of the great public-schools of England can form an idea of the *amitie* existing through life between "Old West-ministers," "Old Etonians," &c. Great was our mutual delight; warm was my welcome.

A more charming place of residence, in the summer, can hardly be imagined than Prince Edward Island. The scenery, without being striking, is sufficiently varied with hill and dale, wood and field.

Charlotte Town is a well built, spacious and thriving provincial city, and the community generally is a perfect Utopia of morality. Not a billiard-table is allowed on the island. Cards, dice, even checkers, are forbidden in public houses, and hardly a living creature is to be seen in the streets after dark.

Unfortunately for the credit of this little British province, hitherto maintained in such sort as to render it a model to its neighbors, the farmers have lately taken a most extraordinary aversion to paying their rents, and to further their unlawful ends have formed a tenant league, the aim and object of which is to enable the tenant farmers to become land-owners *at their own price*.

The wild ideas of these deluded individuals have led to much trouble in this once peaceful community. A magistrate, with troops under his command, has had to assist the sheriff in the execution of his duty in serving writs, and, of course, much ill will has been bred, and many arrests taken place. It is to be hoped, however, that matters will soon be arranged to the satisfaction of all parties and peace restored.

The postal service, as may be imagined, is of rather a primitive character. There are no letter-carriers, no distribution of letters at the houses. Ever and anon the clerks are summoned to the little trap at the wooden edifice, which comprehends under its roof the police-office, station-house and post-office, to respond to the demand, "Anything for me to-day?" and, on the arrival of the fortnightly English mail, the crowd of eager expectants is considerable, and certainly their patience is generally put to a severe test, especially if their vigil be passed in a pouring rain or a driving snow.

Few, however, even of the residents, are fully aware of the difficulties attending the despatch of letters during the winter. All know of course, that they are brought "over the ice," but the general impression seems to be that the straits are *one unbroken sheet of ice*, to cross which, with a boat or sleigh, would be no great hardship or difficulty. But such is very far from being the case.

Hearing the subject mentioned, I soon came to the resolution (with the characteristic love of active adventure of our nation) that I would make this journey myself and see what it really was like, and I wish to make known to the world what is going on in a little corner of it.

It ought to be known, for in these luxurious

days, when millions of letters are daily transmitted from one country to another, an outcry is raised if a single one fails to reach its destination, while yet little thought is given to the extremely intricate nature of the arrangements of a postal service; and here, especially, is an instance in which every letter is conveyed to its destination at the risk of brave men's lives and limbs.

Having made all necessary arrangements for satisfying my curiosity, and earning the right to give an opinion on Arctic experiences, I set off, in mid-winter, from Charlotte Town to Halifax, Nova Scotia.

The weather had been extremely severe, the thermometer down to thirty degrees below zero; I therefore waited for a little more moderate temperature, which greeted me at last, and on February 1st I took leave of Charlotte Town with much regret and started for Cape Tormentine at four P.M. on a lovely afternoon.

My sleigh-driver being an amusing character, and tolerably well-informed, made a pleasant companion, which was a comfort; for nothing is more intolerable than a long, dreary ride with an ignorant, taciturn companion, unable or unwilling to exchange an opinion or an idea with you.

The first part of our journey lay on the ice of one of the fine rivers which flow into the harbor of Charlotte Town, and which become the high roads of traffic whilst the land is buried many feet in snow.

Our sleigh was well laden with all my luggage, concerning which I had many misgivings as to the chance of being able to get it over the straits with me. The ice being pretty free of snow, we progressed well, but after a mile or two we had to take the land and make our course for Cape Tormentine in the best way we could.

The road was utterly choked with the snow, in many places twelve feet deep, but my driver was an old stager at the work and knew well how to find a track, even when there was no trace of a sleigh having passed over the ground before us. We had a splendid horse, who worked as if he was aware that the journey had to be done, and that the better he stuck to it the sooner his night's rest would come. The whole distance is about thirty-four miles by the road, but the devious route we had to follow made the distance nearly half as far again.

About seven o'clock we stopped for supper at a very decent house, which I will call, by courtesy, an inn. Here was good and substantial refreshments for man and beast.

I was pleased to see that my driver showed himself deserving of the excellent horse he had, by the great care he bestowed upon him ere he thought of even entering the house.

After an hour's rest and having laid in a good supply of caloric, we started again. The cold was now intense. Notwithstanding that I was buried in buffalo robes, I felt as if dressed in muslin.

The beauty of the scene, however, was unsurpassable. A brilliant, unclouded full moon, shining on the vast rolling hills of snow, made the surface to shine like a sea of silver, the monotony of which was relieved by the dense masses of dark pine-woods, through the narrow avenues of which

we occasionally wound our way. One only companion of the road did we meet: this was the mail-sleigh coming down from the cape, having crossed the straits that day. Of course a halt was called, and a short conversation ensued, consisting chiefly of interchange of remarks and directions as to the track.

I have said that the aspect of nature in this wild and desolate scene was very beautiful; but I was destined to see even yet more beauty than this. About nine o'clock when I was beginning to experience the terrible effects of the almost irresistible inclinations to fatal sleep, which I was hardly kept from yielding to by constant vigorous pokes with the butt end of the whip, I was suddenly roused by the magnificent lighting up of the heavens by the aurora-borealis. Words must fail to convey any adequate impression of the sublime grandeur of this night. I shall never forget it to the last day of my life.

A little before midnight we arrived at the end of our journey, which was the house of the mail-contractor and captain of the boats, about half a mile from the shore. All were buried in sleep; but this is no place for ceremony. As soon as the horse was provided for we made ourselves comfortable. The house is like a substantial farmer's dwelling. The driver who knew well the habits of the place, soon made up a good fire in the kitchen and routed out some supper, to which we both did ample justice; and then he led me off to a comfortable bedroom, which was kept ready for any such emergency. He told me the boat would start at daybreak, so I had better make good use of the intervening hours, an injunction in which I did not fail to follow. In the morning I found, to my intense disgust, that there was such a heavy mail to be taken across for the English steamer at Halifax, that I could not go.

Remonstrance was useless; in fact, the boat was gone; so there was nothing for it but to kill the day the best way I could. As soon as it was dark I found a general turn-out taking place of the inhabitants of the few houses around, all making for some high ground near the sea-shore. I followed and inquired what was going on. The reply was, "We are looking for the signal."

It appears that the submarine telegraph line, which crosses the straits at this point, being broken, they had no means of learning whether the boat reached the other side in safety. So a huge bonfire was piled up and set fire to at dark, as a signal that all was right, which, if the night was clear, could be seen across the straits. The anxiety with which it was looked for every loving wife or mother will readily understand. We had not long to wait before our eyes were gladdened with the sight of the beacon, which elicited a heartfelt "Thank God, poor fellows!" and all hearts went light to bed.

I was much afraid that I might yet be detained, as snow was beginning to fall, and the boat never attempts to start in a snowstorm, or with the prospects of one in several hours. Anything like a gale of wind, a fog, or very severe cold, likewise put a stop to the expedition: the two former for manifest reasons; the latter, because, as all hands inevitably get more or less wet, there is great risk of loss of limbs

by frostbite—an event by no means of rare occurrence. Snow continued to fall through the night, but happily by morning it cleared up, and at day-break I was awoke and the eventful day began.

My costume, in accordance with directions, was rather strange. A shooting-coat of homespun, a flannel shirt, an old pair of trowsers, with a broad belt round the waist instead of braces, a pair of old thin shoes, with holes in the toes to let the water run out, and a scotch cap with a vail, which a lady kindly gave me to save my eyes from the wind and glare of the snow.

I had to leave nearly all my luggage behind, only twenty pounds being allowed. A sleigh was at the door to convey the mailbags, &c., to the boat, and after a hearty breakfast, at eight A. M., we started, a crew of five men and myself. On the high ground near the shore a careful survey was made, with telescopes, of the straits, to get some idea of the best route to pursue. There lay the straits at our feet, the opposite shore of New Brunswick clearly visible, distant about fifteen miles, except the projection of Cape Traverse, which is only about eleven miles; to this point our course was to be directed.

Our survey ended, we descended on to what is called the shore ice—that is, a band of fixed ice extending about a mile out, of vast thickness. Arrived at the edge of this, our work began. Here we found the boat nearly buried in snow. Having had much experience in boating, I had been reflecting on the style of boat which would be most appropriate to such work, and naturally enough, I came to the conclusion that it must be a large, very strongly built boat, fitted with every contrivance which the difficult, and in no small degree, perilous nature of the service to be performed by it would seem to require.

Judge of my surprise, then, to see a small craft fifteen feet long, shallow and lightly, but, at the same time, strongly built, and sheathed with iron. The bow was square inboard, to allow of making a speedy landing or embarkation, a point of the utmost importance in an emergency, when the lives of all may be sacrificed by a minute's delay. The general build of the boat was of the class known as a Norwegian yawl.

To each side were fastened three short ropes, with a broad band to put over the shoulders and drag the boat when not in the water. Four oars, six boat hooks, with a broad flat hook, instead of a pointed one, as usual, for readily laying hold of small floating pieces of ice. These, with a small keg of water, were all the appointments of our little craft, in which we had to make our voyage of most uncertain duration. Only the week before the boat was out for thirty-six hours. A fog having come on, they lost their course and were carried away among the drifting masses of ice. They were given up for lost. Fires were lighted up all along the coast, and when at last they reached land, it was a great distance from the cape, and the crew were in a state of extreme exhaustion from fatigue and want of food; for strange to say, *no provisions were taken in the boat.*

Our work now fairly commenced. The boat was launched, the mail-bags stowed, great-coats and wrappers taken off and put into a large water-

proof bag, adieus paid to the small party who had accompanied us thus far, and then the captain gave the word, "All aboard."

Here I met my first misfortune. In getting into the boat I stepped on a loose piece of ice, which gave way under me, and in I went, up to my waist.

Now had the weather been severe, here my expedition must have ended, for to have proceeded in this wet state would most probably have entailed the freezing of my limbs. As, however, the day was comparatively mild, the active exertion of rowing and dragging the boat obviated any evil consequences.

The first part of the voyage was perhaps the most laborious of the whole day's work. The water was covered with what they term "lolly," or "slob"—i. e., very small pieces of ice and snow mixed together, making the surface of the consistency of pea-soup.

The captain steered the boat. I was put to row the stroke oar. Never had I such a desperate pull. It was almost impossible to force the boat through this horrible lolly, which was elastic almost as india-rubber, and for every two feet of way we made we were squeezed back one.

At length, after about two hours of this work, we reached the edge of a "field," or vast mass of floating ice more than a mile wide. On to this we thankfully landed, and dragged up the boat. This field was perfectly level like a table, and the ice was about four feet thick. We then donned our harness and set forward, dragging the boat through about two feet of snow.

Now I saw and felt the sense of having a light boat; every ounce was a consideration. We were unfortunate in having so much snow on the ice, the result of last night's storm. When the ice is smooth, or "glib," as they call it, the "fielding" is famous; all goes merry as a marriage bell. This was toilsome work, but acceptable as a change of the strain from the arms to the legs. I could not help thinking we all looked remarkably like a gang of convicts at work.

As this field was drifting fast to the eastward, we were obliged to traverse it diagonally to allow for lee-way. On reaching the extremity of this, we found a tolerably clear channel. In went the boat.

"All aboard. Ship your oars and give way, my hearties;" and give way we did with a will, till we again became entangled in floating ice, which required more caution. We now began to get among masses of piled up ice, many of them as high as a small house, and of most fantastic shapes. Also the color of some of the blocks on which the sun shone was very beautiful—brilliant green, blue and red.

We now made for another enormous field which lay right in our course. Before reaching it, we had a very ugly bit of work. A distance of perhaps a furlong had only lately been frozen. It was too thick to break and force the boat through, yet not quite strong enough to bear the weight of the whole party. So that as we marched over it, dragging the boat, the ice frequently gave way, keeping us jumping like so many chamois. Here I came to grief a second time.

TO BECONTINUED.

## RARE BUENOS AYRES STAMPS.

A friend of ours residing in Newburyport and having some 2000 stamps, has treated us to a look at and to touch a set of the *extremely rare* "Gaucho" stamps of this country. We may be excused in italicising the word *extremely* when we mention that they are priced in Europe, if our memory is good, at five sovereigns or \$35 (?) each.

They were issued in August or September 1859 and were used only for a few days:

They are four in number, as follows:

4 rls. yellow, 8 rls. purple, 6 rls. green, 10 rls. blue.

Our cotemporary the S. C. Magazine, says that only the first three of these are at all attainable; these came direct from Buenos Ayres and are without doubt, if our worthy friend, the *Magazine*, be right in his description of the native counterfeits, the whole *four* of them *genuine*.

The happy possessor may well feel proud of them for we don't believe that their match can be found in America.

THE  
STAMP COLLECTOR'S

**HAND BOOK:**

Giving a description of all the stamps issued from 1840 to August 1867, compiled by the late C. M. SELTZ.

The above is the only reliable catalogue of stamps now in the market, as it is one year later than the English and two years later than any American publication.

Will be sent to any address postpaid on receipt of 25 cents.

F. TRIFET,

57 Court St.,

Boston, Mass.

## POSTAL ITEMS.

Leonidas Moses, a mail carrier in Arkansas, was assassinated recently by some unknown person, while riding along a lonely road. His body was not found until eight days after the murder, and all this time his mule stood guard over the corpse. The faithful animal had to go a mile and a half for water, but invariably returned and resumed its singular vigil.

**UNITED STATES LOCALS.**—The great majority of the United States locals were issued by private persons, who endeavoured to compete with the government by a cheaper rate of carriage or delivery; some of them were used to prepay the conveyance of letters from the districts of a city to the central post-office. Nearly all are now obsolete original specimens are rare; but reprints are obtainable without difficulty. Within the last two years there have been numerous reported discoveries of plates from which long-forgotten locals were printed; but there is little doubt that many dishonest fabrications have been offered for sale as reprint impressions from such plates. Similar productions, announced as newly issued and current stamps, are also from time to time sought to be imposed on the public.—GRAY'S CATALOGUE.

Three postal treaties were arranged at the Post Office Department a few days ago for transmission to the President for his signature. These treaties embrace the recent postal conventions between the United States and the North German Union, including Prussia, the Swiss Confederation and the Empire of China.

The authorities are going to apply legal penalties to those parties who make it a practice to use the envelopes stamped with signatures of Government officials for private purposes. Seven instances of the violation of the statutes have been brought to the attention of these officials by the P. O. Department.

An effort is to be made to induce the President to appoint an agent, through the Post Office Department, who will be empowered to receive and make up packages to be forwarded by mail under the new postal law recently concluded between this country and Prussia. The object of this agency is to take the place or obviate the necessity of sending such packages by express. — BOSTON HERALD.

LIST OF UNITED STATES  
REVENUE STAMPS,

FOR SALE BY F. TRIFET.

Device.	Facial Value.	Selling Price.
Agreement,	5 cents.	\$
Bank Check,	2 cents, blue and orange.	.01
Bill of Lading,	10 cents.	.01
Bond,	25 cents.	.02
Certificate,	2 cents, blue and orange.	
	5 "	
	10 "	.01
	25 "	.02
	1 dollar.	
Charter Party,	3 "	.08
	5 "	.06
	10 "	
Contract,	10 cents.	.01
	50 cents.	.02
	1 dollar.	
Conveyance,	2 "	.05
	5 "	.06
	10 "	.25
	20 "	1.25
	50 "	2.50
	25 cents.	.02
Entry of Goods,	50 cents.	
	1 dollar.	
	1 cent.	
Express,	2 " blue and orange.	
	5 "	
	3 cents.	.01
	5 "	.01
	10 "	
	15 "	
	20 "	
Foreign Exchange	30 "	
	50 "	
	70 "	
	1 dollar.	
	1 " 30 cents.	
	1 " 60 "	
	1 " 90 "	
	3 cents.	
	4 "	.01
	5 "	.01
	6 "	.01
	10 "	.01
	15 "	.02
Inland Exchange,	20 "	.01
	30 "	.02
	40 "	.02
	60 "	.03
	1 dollar.	.03
	1 " 50 cents.	.05
	2 " 50 "	.05
	3 " 50 "	
Insurance,	10 cents	
	25 "	.02
Lease,	50 cents.	
	1 dollar	.03

Life Insurance,	25 cents.	
	50 "	
	1 dollar.	
Lottery Ticket,	50 cents.	
	1 dollar.	
Manifest,	3 "	
	5 "	
	50 cents.	
	1 dollar.	
	2 "	.05
Mortgage,	5 "	
	10 "	
	15 "	
	25 "	
Original Process,	50 cents.	.03
Passage Ticket,	50 cents.	
	1 dollar.	
	1 cent.	
	2 " blue and orange.	
Playing Cards,	3 "	
	4 "	
	5 "	
	10 "	
Power of Attor'y,	10 cents.	.01
	25 "	.02
	1 dollar.	.03
	50 cents	
	1 dollar.	
Probate of Will,	2 "	.06
	5 "	
	10 "	
	20 "	
Protest,	25 cents.	.02
	1 cent.	.01
	2 " blue and orange.	
Proprietary,	3 "	.01
	4 "	
	5 "	
	10 "	
Surety Bond,	50 cents.	.02
Telegraph,	1 cent.	
	3 "	
U. S. Int. Rev.,	5 cents.	.01
Warehouse Rec't,	2 cents.	.02
No Denomination	200 dollar	

WANTED.—All kinds of Revenues not PRICE in this list.

FLAGS OF ALL NATIONS; beautifully colored; suitable for HILL's Album, 25 cents  
Arms of Nations, 25 cents.

F. TRIFET,  
57 Court Street, Boston, Mass.

WANTED, all kinds of Stamps, especially the old issues of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, &c. Also, South American Stamps, for which the best price, either in cash or stamps, will be given.

F. TRIFET,  
57 Court Street, Boston, Mass.

A POSTAL EXCHANGE. A farmer recently observed a man trespassing on his grounds. Being much enraged thereat, he threw an old post at the fellow, at the same time demanding his business there. The man spoke not, but hurled the wood back again at the querist; so that the farmer received his answer "per return of post."

**F. TRIFET,**

Wholesale and Retail Daaler in

**American and Foreign**

# **POSTAGE STAMPS,**

USED AND UNUSED, PRESENT AND  
OBSOLETE.

ALSO,

**Local Stamps,**

**Revenue Stamps.**

**Proof Stamps,**

**Essay Stamps,**

**Stamp Albums.**

**&c., &c., &c.**

I defy comparison with any dealer, warranting his stamps. Prices: 20 page catalogue forwarded to any address on receipt of 15 cents.

Persons ordering over \$3 worth of STAMPS at one time from this list will be allowed a Discount of 10 per cent; above \$5 worth at one time 15 per cent.

### Newly Issued Unused Stamps, Cheap.

Austria 2kr yellow, 6c; Bavaria 1kr green, 4c; Belgium 2c blue, 5c; Bermuda 1d rose, 8c; Brazil 10r red, 6c; Bremen 1gr pink or orange, 5c; Egypt 5pa green, 5c; 10 brown, 6c; Portugal 5r black, 5c; Prussia 1kr green, 5c; Servia 1p green 5c, 2 brown, 6c; Spain 2c brown, 6c; Swiss envelope rose, 10c; Turk's Island 1d red, 10c.

Austria newspaper 1kr blue, 5c; Baden 1kreut. black, 5c, 3kr envelope rose, 3c; Bahamas 1d rose, 8c; Belgium 1c green or slate, 3c each; Br. Guiana 1c black, 5c; Confederate States 2c red, 6c, 5c blue, 5c, 10c blue, 5c, 20c green 10c; New Orleans 2c red or blue, 5c, 5c brown, 6c; Denmark env. 2s blue, 8c; France 1c green, 3c, 2c brown, 3c, 4c mauve, 4c; French Colonies 1c 3c; Great Britain Local stamps, 4c each; Greece 1l brown, 3c, 2l cinnamon, 5c; Hamburg Locals, 1c each; Italy 1c green, 3c, 2c brown, 5c; Luxembourg 1c buff or brown, 3c; New Brunswick 1c 3c 2c orange, 4c; Nicaragua 2c blue, 15c; Spain 2c rose, 6c; Switzerland 2c grey, 3c, 3c black, 4cts; Wurtemburg 1kr. env, green, 5c

Used Obsolete Stamps, cheap.

Austria 1st. 2d. & 3d. issues, 3c each; Baden 1st. issue, 4c. Bavaria 1, 3, 6, & 9krs. 3c each; Denmark 4 R B S and 4s, 3c each; Germany 3k blue 3c; Holland 5 & 10c, 4c; Prussian, Italian, &c. equally cheap.

Sets of Unused Stamps, cheap.

Belgium set of 4, 15cts; Cape of Good Hope square set of 4, \$1.25; Confederate States set of 4 25 cts; Egypt 1866, set of 7, \$2.30; 1867, set of 6, \$2.00; France set of 4, 12cts; Hamburg locals set of 116, \$1.00; Spain set of 4, 20cts.; United States 1851, set of 8, \$1.50; N. Y. Post Office set of 5, \$2.00; U. S. envelopes 1853-64, about 40 varieties \$8.00; Wells, Fargo & Co. set of 11 \$2.00.

Cheap Packets.

The 25ct. packet of used stamps contains 40 varieties including, Austria, Holland, Saxony &c.

The \$1.00 packet of used and unused stamps contains 75 varieties including, Russia, Bahamas, Belgium, Denmark, Egypt, &c

The \$2.00 packet of used and unused stamps contains 125 varieties including Bavaria 1867 Servia, Tuscany, W. Australia, Hanover, Sardinia, Greece, &c.

The \$5.00 packet of RARE stamps contains 100 varieties including, Austria, Bavaria, Heligoland Spain, Servia, Turk's Island, Virgin Island, &c. all of 1867 issue, Brazil, Egypt, Portugal, Nicaragua, Parma, Spain 185-, &c. This packet is the best put up in America and is well worth \$10.00.

Mixed Continentals, for dealers.

Well mixed stamps at 30, 40, 50 and 60 cents per hundred, or, \$2.50, \$3.50, \$4.50 and \$5.00 a thousand.

All letters, orders included, must contain stamp for return postage.

Letters answered and orders filled per return of mail.

**ALL STAMPS WARRANTED GENUINE.**

All kinds of stamps bought and exchanged.

For any of the above apply to, or address

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FOREIGN POSTAGE STAMPS;  
78 Nassau Street New York city.

# The

# American Stamp Mercury

VOL. I.

BOSTON, DEC. 25, 1867.

No. 3.

## The American Stamp Mercury.

Published on the 25th of every month by F. TRIFET.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES, 50 CENTS PER YEAR, IN ADVANCE. SINGLE COPIES 5 CENTS.

TO GETTERS UP OF CLUBS. To any person sending us three subscribers, Packet No. 34 of our list will be given; five subscribers, No. 21; eight subscribers, No. 25.

The postage (12 cents a year) must be paid at the office where the paper is received.

### ADVERTISEMENTS.

10 cents per line for one insertion, or 50 cents for six months.

All letters respecting the paper should be addressed to F. TRIFET, Publisher of Stamp Mercury, Box 444, Boston, Mass.

## REMOVAL.

Our business having increased so much lately, and the publication of the "Mercury" demanding extra room, we have been obliged to remove our place of business from 57 COURT STREET, to

## 20 STATE STREET, ROOM 9,

Where we will be happy to see our patrons. We have, now, facilities for filling ANY order PER RETURN MAIL, SURE.

## THANKS AGAIN.

On our third appearance before the timbophilic public of America, we would again most warmly thank them for the patronage they have given us, and hope that it may continue as well as it began.

We would again ask our friends to do all they can to obtain subscribers. If only one name, send

it on, for "the ocean is made but of drops," and every little helps. We would call the attention of new subscribers to the fact that we have but a few copies of the first number on hand, and if they would obtain a full file of the MERCURY, they had better send their names at once.

Before taking our leave, we would most cordially wish a MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY NEW YEAR to all our friends, at home and abroad, and wish that their undertaking during the coming year may prove as successful as the publication of the "MERCURY" has been.

## NEWLY-ISSUED STAMPS.

We have to beg our subscribers' pardon for not having any cuts in this Number of the Mercury; wishing to have it out before Christmas, and the cuts not being done, we had, very reluctantly to give up the idea. We promise to make it up in our next.

SPAIN.—A new value has been added to the series with value of milesimos. It is very much like the ten brown. Large figure 5 in centre on ground of horizontal lines; inscription, ESPANA CORREOS CINCO MILLS. DE ESCUDO. Color, deep-green, perforated.

STRAITS SETTLEMENT.—Since our last four new values, identical design with the others, have been added as follows:

TWO	CENTS,	red	on 1 anna brown.
FOUR	"	black	" 1 " "
TWELVE	"	carmine	" 4 " green.
THIRTY-TWO	"	black	" 2 " orange.

NEW SCOTLAND.—The Transvaal Republic, or New Scotland as it is sometimes called, will shortly have a set of stamps.

BOLIVIA.—There are several varieties of the recently issued five cent stamp of this country, they being struck off from different dies.

**SWITZERLAND.**—An envelope of the same design as the 10 centime, value 5 centimes has been issued; color, light brown.

**CONFEDERATE STATES.**—The *S. C. Magazine* has an article describing a newly discovered (!) stamp of this concern. At a late visit of the Editor to New York, he was shown some of them by dealers there, and was assured that they were genuine. Without meaning any offence to these parties, we must give it as our opinion, that they are a down-right swindle; their large numbers and very low price (for such rare stamps,) asked for them being positive evidence against them. One of our correspondents has been victimized by one of them, and we will proceed to give a description of them to keep others from being caught. It is the same design as the five 1863 issue, but having Stonewall Jackson's (?) head instead of Davis, value, ten cents at bottom, color, carmine. There are also a very few specimens struck on India paper in scarlet and sold as "proofs," BEWARE!

While on this subject we may call the attention of the *S. C. M.* to the fact that the **MERCHANTS UNION EXPRESS CO'S** Stamp they mention in their last, is only a business card struck on the company's envelopes.

**LUXEMBURG.**—Has a 20 cent stamp, color brown, perforated.

## THE MONEY ORDER SYSTEM

A brief résumé of the postal money order system, as conducted by the United States Government, cannot be devoid of interest to our readers, although the great masses of the people are ignorant of the principles upon which it is based, if not, indeed, of the existence of such a system.

It is a system designed to benefit the public, as well as to be a source of prolific revenue to the Government; and for business men, and all others who wish to send small sums of money to a distance, no scheme has ever been devised which provided so effectually for a great public necessity. It is virtually impossible for thousands of persons residing in the country to obtain bank drafts, and the express companies charge exorbitant rates for the transmission of small sums. Many are in the habit of sending money through the mails in registered letters; but it cost twenty cents to have a letter registered, and no security whatever is guaranteed the remitter, while a money order of any amount from one dollar to twenty can be procured for ten

cents, and for any sum between twenty and fifty for twenty-five cents, and full security for its transmission guaranteed. The great advantages of this system consist in its moderate fees and the perfect security it affords againsts fraud or loss. This security is effected by leaving out the name of the person to whom an order is payable, so in the event of its being stolen or lost by accident in transitu, a party in illegal possession cannot get it cashed. Should an order be lost the owner can obtain a duplicate without delay or difficulty. So absolute, in fact, is the security afforded remitters of funds, that even a postmaster who might attempt to defraud the Government by altering the amount of an order, or by forgery, is morally certain to be detected. The superiority of this system over any other now in exercise has been fully demonstrated.

In 1867 the number of offices was 767, except in the last quarter of the fiscal year, when sixty eight more were added. The precise amount of business done during the year has not yet transpired, owing to the unavoidable delay in the Pacific mails; enough is known, however, to make the estimate of \$10,000,000 a safe one, and the amount will probably be in excess of that, which is nearly treble that of last year. By an act of Congress nearly four hundred more offices will be in operation in the year 1868, making a total of twelve hundred and thirty five offices; and should, the business of this department increase in the same ratio as heretofore, twenty millions of dollars will be a moderate estimate for the present fiscal year (1868).

The department check is thorough in every respect, and fraud is utterly impossible. Each postmaster is obliged by law to furnish the department with a weekly statement of business done at his office, and if there be the slightest error in his account he is at once notified thereof.

During the last fiscal year the post-office of New York City has issued 11,817 orders; and paid 86,070 orders. For orders drawn on that office \$1,387,917 has been paid, and for orders issued \$312,997 received.

We advise all our subscribers who can avail themselves of the money order system to do so. It is a perfectly safe way of remitting.

## WINTER MAIL SERVICE

ACROSS THE  
traits of Northumberland,FROM PRINCE EDWARD'S ISLAND TO THE MAIN-  
LAND OF NEW BRUNSWICK.

[CONCLUDED.]

Having foolishly let go my hold, as the ice broke under me, I was forced to keep jumping from one piece to another, going further and faring worse all the time, until at last I had to throw myself flat on my face till the boat reached me.

We then landed on this field. The water ran out of the toes of my shoes charmingly; but one unhappy member of the party, who was arrayed in high boots up to his thighs, beyond which depth we had been in water, was obliged to give us an amusing little exhibition of himself by lying down on his face and turning his legs up in the air, by which operation he discharged several gallons of water.

This field was very different from the last, being rough, with numerous holes. In some parts the blocks of ice were piled up to a considerable height, and we had hard work to drag the boat up, but still more was it dangerous when the summit was passed and the boat went bounding down the other side.

Being fast to the boat by our harness, we were obliged to go with it, and really some of the leaps were frightful, considering the slippery nature of the ground we had to alight on. There was also a considerable risk of getting one's legs cut. On this field we called a halt, and sundry lumps of bread, &c., were produced from pockets, but most of it was spoiled by the water.

A good friend at Charlotte Town had given me a bottle of sherry for the journey, but alas! I left it behind in his store, so that he had all the credit of having given it to me, and moreover, the satisfaction of drinking the sherry himself after all. Lucky dog! I certainly lamented my carelessness most bitterly. I had nothing but a small flask of whiskey, which I fairly divided.

We now had a good lookout for the boat, which we knew was to cross that day, in the opposite direction. We made it out at last, about three miles off, crossing a field nearly abreast of us, but away down to the eastward. They evidently had not been able to hold a direct course, and we feared that this augured badly for the last part of our journey.

We hoisted a coat on a boathook, but they did not see us, and in a few minutes were shut out from our sight. I saw afterwards by telegram that they were nine hours and a half getting across. After about fifteen minutes' rest we started again. The remainder of the voyage was but a repetition of what had gone before, with the exception of one

incident, which involved a very narrow escape.

We had accomplished about three-quarters of the distance, and were beginning to look to the terminataon of our labors; Cape Traverse was full in sight, and even the porthouse, which was our goal, and we knew that we could now be seen by the lookout, who watched the course of the boat as soon as it came in sight, in order to send the sleigh along the coast to meet the party, if they got carried away out of their course, and had to make land where they could. We quitted a field, and made for another about half a mile distant, the water between being tolerably open.

As we approached the edge of the second field, however, we got into the lolly again which gradually got so dense that we could not move the boat through it.

We observed two vast masses of ice, piled up to a great height, borne by contending currents along the edge of the field, coming right down upon us.

"Pull for your lives—give way," cried the captain, and every nerve was strained.

Slowly we forced the boat on through the seething mass, which became every moment thicker and thicker as the advancing icebergs (as I may call them) compressed it all more and more closely.—Nearer and nearer came our two enemies, seemingly bent on our destruction. Still we pulled till the boat quivered again with the vigorous strokes of four strong men rowing for their lives; while the captain's voice continued to urge us on.

We were within a few yards of the field, and the icebergs close upon us, when suddenly the iron rowlock of one of the oars was knocked out of its rocker, fell overboard, and sank. I had noticed to the captain that the rowlocks ought to be secured to the boat in case of accident, but he replied that they never came out. As it was, our lives were all placed in jeopardy by the omission. Of course it was all up with rowing, but, in desperation, we forced the boat to the edge of the ice, and the men jumped out just as the icebergs came upon us.

I caught up a boat-hook and leaped on to a loose piece of ice for a raft, on which I succeeded in reaching the field, and was just on the point of jumping on to it when my spiteful enemy, who was passing by, managed to give a kick, under water, to my little raft, and pitched me once more into the water. I scrambled out in time to see the boat safely hauled up just as the two monsters met, gave one another a horrible bump, and then passed on their respective ways.

We were all truly thankful for our narrow escape. But I began to get a little anxious. The weather had changed during the last hour. A storm was evidently approaching; it was getting very cold, and I began to feel very exhausted and numb.—How I did long for that bottle of sherry. If the shore ice on this side was lined with jolly, as on the opposite shore, we had yet some severe work to do. Happily, however, the rest of our course was easy; this was the last field, and, when we arrived at the edge of it; to our great joy we found quite clear water all the rest of the way.

In went the boat, and with a cheer we feel to the oars again, an extempore rowlock being improvised in place of that lost. In half an hour we reached

the shore ice, where was a party waiting for us.—We left them to pull the boat out of the water, and throwing ourselves down on the truck sleigh, were drawn up to the post-house, at which we arrived in six hours and ten minutes from leaving Cape Tormentive.

I suffered much for some time, but after changing all my clothes and eating some dinner, I got all right, and being so fortunate as to find a sleigh there, from the Bay of Verte, I engaged the driver to take me on, a distance of about thirty miles.—His drive was a repetition of that from Charlotte Town, only colder, with a heavy snow-storm for two days. We could not hold out for more than an hour at a time, without stopping at a cottage for a good warm.

I slept at Verte Bay, and the next day proceeded in the same way to Amhurst, about twenty-five miles. Here I was once more in civilization; and from this proceeded in a regular mail sleigh to Truro, about sixty miles. How the letters get from the cape to Amhrst goodness only knows.—Any one seems to pick up the bags and take them on as far as he is going.

At Amhurst, however, everything commences to go on *en regle*. A day and a half brought me to Truro, where is the railroad to Halifax, and thus ended my eventful journey. I was fortunate in recovering all my luggage piecemeal, in *three weeks'* time. The whole journey cost me six pounds sterling, not counting the cost of doing up my unhappy watch.

If any reader of this article has a correspondent in Prince Edward Island, let him not greatly wonder if, at any future time, between the months of December and May, a letter fails to reach its destination; for, occasionally, a whole mail has been obliged to be thrown overboard.—*Frank Leslie's Chimney Corner.*

### POSTAL ITEMS.

—A return has just been published in London from which it appears that the persons employed on Sunday throughout the United Kingdom comprise 31 inspectors, 758 postmasters, 1,054 clerks 877 stampers and assorters, 3,762 letter carriers, 2,711 rural messengers, 8,852 sub-postmasters or receivers, and 2,716 "other persons," chiefly mail guards, mail cart drivers, and assistants at the smaller country offices. There are 454 head offices and 6,172 sub-offices open to the public on Sunday in England, 1,582 are not open. In Scotland 133 head offices and 1,082 sub-offices are open and 159 are closed. In Ireland 133 head offices and 1,485 sub offices are open, and 40 are closed.

—A LONDONER inquired at the Post Office in Erie, Pa., the other day, for a letter for "Henry Hogden". He was told there was none. "Look 'ere he replied a little angrily, "you 'ave hexamined a hold letter for my name. It don't commence with a haitch. It begins with a ho! Look in the ole that's got the ho's."

### VERY RARE STAMPS.

Under this heading we propose to give a series of articles which will give the description, cause of rarity, market value &c. of some of the rarest stamps known. Our first article will be on

#### THE EMBORESSED STAMPS OF NATAL.

Very few collectors possess any of these stamps; which is easily accounted for by their scarcity and extremely poor condition they are generally in. The series consists of five values, each of a different design and from separate dies;

The design are as follow; One penny. Rectangular; laced border; ONE above, PENNY below; crown in upper part of centre; NATAL beneath.

On blue, buff, and rose paper.

Market value, \$3.50 used.

The rose is the rarest, excepting for collector of shades when the LIGHT-blue takes that rank. Threepence. Large irregular-shaped design; NATAL in curved line above; crown underneath with v. r. disposed one letter on each side.

THREEPENCE in oval medallion in lower part of stamp.

On pink paper.

Market value, \$1.00 used.

Sixpence. Rectangular frame; ornamented corners; NATAL above; crown, with v. r. on each side, in centre; SIX PENCE in two lines below.

On green paper.

Market value, \$6.00 unused, \$4.00 used.

The last two are the most common of the set but clear specimen cannot be had.

Ninepence. Large design; NATAL above; crown beneath it v. r. on sides. NINEPENCE, in two lines, inside of laurel wreath below crown.

On blue paper.

Market value, \$6.00 unused.

This is the rarest, although not dearest, of the series very few collectors having a specimen.

One shilling. Rectangular frame with the upper and lower sides curved. NATAL above, crown below supported by the letters v. r.; ONE in a straight line under the crown, SHILLING in a curve at bottom.

On buff paper.

Market value, \$10.00 used.

This stamp is also of great rarity.

The design of the above stamps were engraved on steel, and are embossed on the paper; no printing or coloring was used. The paper employed is thickish; it has been called blotting paper but is not as it is sized. They are adhesive; the gum used being very thick. The date of issue is supposed to be 1852 or '57; the currency ceased in 1860 to give place to the series with the Queen's head. They were principally used on newspapers which accounts for their scarcity.

There are reprints existing which are, on close examination, proved to be from the genuine dies.\* Also fac similes, but the maker, as such men generally do, blundered and indented the device, so that it appears SUNK instead of IN RELIEF.

\* The publisher advertise them at \$8.00 per set of seven. WARANTED GENUINE.

## Answers to Correspondents.

C. K. J. & Co.; C. & H. G. Manchester Eng.—Send wholesale catalogues.

M. & Co. Philadelphia.—We are obliged for notice, will reciprocate in next number.

G. H. W. Pennington N. J.—Also to you for story but cannot use it as it has nothing to do with stamps. The first stamp you describe is an Italian Revenue; the other we cannot make out.

C. W. Norwich N. Y.—The new three cent U. S. stamp ought to have a place in your album as we can't see why the 'large' and 'small' lettered stamps of Great Britain; the 'Athenian' and 'Paris printed' stamps of Greece, and other such trifling differences should be clasified and all the varieties of our own stamps be laid on the shelf.

C. R. Flushing N. Y.—The ten cent Confederate, same design as the one cent, is, undoubtely, a hum bug. Sorry you got "taken in," you ought to know who you deal with.

G. W. K. Cincinnati O.—The reason you don't get an answer from C.M. Seltz is that he is dead he having departed this life in September.

F. A. D. MONTROSE PA—1. The dealers in England call the stamps of Europe 'Continents', hence by "mixed continentals" is meant mixed European stamps. 2. "Essays" are designs for stamps rejected by the Government. 3. "Proofs" are regular stamps struck off in various colors.

W. B. OMAHA. We can get for you any book or publication at the regular retail price and forward it free of carriage.

BIG INDIAN.—We will subscribe for you on receipt of two dollars, per year.

HOOSIER.—We are sorry to say he is not.

## CONUNDRUMS.

No. 3. Why is a Confederate two cent stamp like a Newspaper?

No. 4. Why should a Postmaster in the U. S. sometimes be called a Traitor?

Answers in our next.  
WANTED; contributors to this column.

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*Egypt 1866			2.30
* " 1867	6	"	2.00
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" South	10	"	.25
Great Britain	12	"	.30
Greece	7	"	.30
*Hamburg Boten	116	"	1.00
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India	6	"	.20
Italy	6	"	.18
Jamaica	6	"	.35
Luxemburg	4	"	.15
*Natal	7	" embossed	8.00
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	1 dollar.	
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	5 "	.06
	10 "	.25
Contract,	10 cents.	.01
	50 cents.	.02
	1 dollar.	
Conveyance,	2 "	.05
	5 "	
	10 "	
	20 "	
	50 "	
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	50 cents.	
	1 dollar.	
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	5 "	.02
	3 cents.	.01
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	10 "	
	15 "	
	20 "	
	30 "	
Foreign Exchange	50 "	
	70 "	.03
	1 dollar.	
	1 " 30 cents.	
	1 " 60 "	
	1 " 90 "	
	3 cents.	
	4 "	.01
	5 "	.01
	6 "	.01
	10 "	.01
	15 "	.02
	20 "	.01
	30 "	.02
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	60 "	.03
	1 dollar.	.03
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	1 dollar.
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	1 cent.
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	50 cents
	1 dollar.
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